

Message Text

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43

ACTION DLOS-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00

COA-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 INR-07 IO-10 L-02

NSF-01 NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-03 RSC-01 OES-03 SS-15 SP-02

CG-00 DOTE-00 AGR-05 FMC-01 INT-05 JUSE-00 OMB-01

TRSE-00 /095 W

----- 039373

P 251209Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7148

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

USUN NEW YORK 1287

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 686

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLOS, TU, GR

SUBJ: LOS: AEGEAN ISSUE

REF: (A) STATE 08543 (NOTAL) (B) ANKARA 418 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. OVER ALL USG HOPES FOR SECURING BROADEST POSSIBLE AGREEMENT IN LOS CONFERENCE ON MAJOR AGENDA ITEMS (INCLUDING TERRITORIAL SEA LIMITATIONS) DEPEND TO SIGNIFICANT DEGREE ON SEPARATING DISPUTES OF LOCALIZED NATURE FROM BROADER LOS FORUM. GREEK/TURKISH AEGEAN DISPUTE HAS NOW ASSUMED SUCH BITTER AND DIVISIVE NATURE THAT USG MAY WISH CONSIDER EXERCISING INITIATIVE AIMED BOTH AT PREVENTING A MOST SERIOUS BREACH BETWEEN TWO NATO ALLIES
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AND PROTECTING ITS OWN BROADER LOS GOALS. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY FULLY APPRECIATES OVERALL USG GOAL OF ACHIEVING BROADEST POSSIBLE AGREEMENT ON WIDEST NUMBER AGENDA ITEMS BEFORE LOS CONFERENCE, AND AGREES THAT LOS RELATED DISPUTES--OF PREDOMINANTLY LOCAL CHARACTER--PREFERABLY HANDLED THROUGH BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS. SUCH US OBJECTIVES AS ACHIEVING GENERAL CONSENSUS ON SPECIFIC TERRITORIAL SEA LIMITS SHOULD NOT BE EITHER SCRAPPED OR DILUTED AS RESULT SPECIALIZED PROBLEMS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO ONLY FEW OF MANY CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS. SUCH DIFFICULTIES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED DIRECTLY BY THE PARTIES THEMSELVES THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS AND SEPARATE AGREEMENTS.

3. GREEK/TURKISH DISPUTE OVER COMPLEX OF CONCERNS GENERALLY CHARACTERIZED AS THE "AEGEAN ISSUE" HAS IN COURSE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS ESCALATED TO SUCH A POINT THAT

IT COULD CONSTITUTE CAUSE FOR SIGNIFICANT BREACH--INCLUDING POSSIBILITY OF HOSTILITIES--BETWEEN THESE TWO US/NATO ALLIES. WHILE THE PROBLEMS GENERATED BY THIS ISSUE TRANSCEND PURELY LOS CONCERNS, RUDIMENTARY ELEMENTS ARE INEXTRICABLY ROOTED IN THE LOA ARENA, E.G. STATUS OF ISLANDS, CONTINENTAL SHELF RESOURCES, TERRITORIAL SEA LIMITS, ETC. THE PROBLEM FOR USG THEN IS TWOFOLD:

(1) TO CONTAIN DISPUTE IN NEAR TERM TO AVERT CHANCES OF GREEK-TURKISH CONFRONTATION INIMICAL TO US AND NATO SECURITY INTERESTS IN EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND (2) TO INITIATE PROCESS LEADING TO BILATERAL RATHER THAN MULTILATERAL DISCUSSIONS ON UNDERLYING LOS RELATED ISSUES.

4. WE FULLY UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT REASONING ADVANCED BY EMBASSY ANKARA (REF B) THAT PRIMARY FOCUS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED ON RESOLUTION CYPRUS PROBLEM IN HOPES THAT POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS THERE WOULD IN DUE COURSE CREATE FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH GREEKS AND TURKS WOULD THEN ADDRESS AEGEAN ISSUE. HOWEVER, AEGEAN ISSUE HAS NOT HEATED UP TO SUCH A DEGREE, AS A RESULT OF STACCATO TEMPO OF STATEMENTS IN RECENT WEEKS BY BOTH GREEK AND TURKISH LEADERS (WITH ACCOMPANYING JINGOISTIC RHETORIC), THAT IT IS RAPIDLY ASSUMING A LIFE OF ITS OWN NOT READILY SUSCEPTIBLE TO "PACKAGING" WITH OTHER ISSUES. THUS, IT

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MAY NO LONGER BE POSSIBLE TO FOLLOW APPROACH OF "TYING-IN" CONSIDERATION OF AEGEAN ISSUE WITH POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN CYPRUS. TIME MAY NOW BE PROPITIOUS FOR EXERCISE OF AN APPROPRIATE, QUIET U.S. INITIATIVE LIMITED TO ENCOURAGING COMMENCEMENT OF BILATERAL TALKS BETWEEN TWO CONTESTANTS.

5. AS EMBASSY ANKARA HAS SAID (REF B), SUCH A U.S. ROLE

WOULD MAKE SENSE IF AEGEAN ISSUE SHOULD SUDDENLY
"HEAT UP". CONCERN EXPRESSED HERE BY RANKING MFA
OFFICIAL TO DCM ON JANUARY 22 (ATHENS 594) MIGHT PROVIDE
ADDITIONAL OPENING FOR US ACTION AIMED AT TAMPING DOWN
THIS VOLATILE ISSUE. WHILE IN SOME RESPECTS THIS MAY
BE LESS THAN IDEAL TIME FOR US SHOW OF INTEREST ON THIS
QUESTION, THERE IS NO ASSURANCE THAT AN APPRECIABLY
BETTER TIME WILL ARISE IN NEAR FUTURE--AND THE SITUATION IN
MEANTIME COULD DETERIORATE.

6. WHAT WE HAVE IN MIND IS AN INITIATIVE
SIGNALLING US INTEREST AND CONCERN ABOUT AEGEAN PROBLEMS
RATHER THAN A MAJOR EFFORT TO ARRIVE AT A PACKAGE
SETTLEMENT. THE LATTER IS ALMOST CERTAINLY IMPOSSIBLE
TO ACHIEVE IN THE SHORT TERM AND WILL REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE
ADVANCE PREPARATION. A MODERATING INITIATIVE BY U.S.
ON THE OTHER HAND COULD BUY TIME AND PERHAPS REDUCE THE
DANGER OF UNILATERAL ACTS OR FAITS ACCOMPLIS BY EITHER
OR BOTH CONTESTING PARTIES WHICH WOULD PREJUDICE THE
POSSIBILITY OF REACHING AN EVENTUAL OVERALL SETTLEMENT.
IN THAT SENSE, WE SUPPORT SUGGESTED DEPARTMENTAL ACTION
REFERRED TO IN PAR 6 OF REF A.

7. AS TO SPECIFIC PROPOSALS WE BELIEVE HIGH VISIBILITY
VISITS TO ANKARA OR ATHENS BY US LOS EXPERTS WOULD NOT BE
WISE. PERHAPS U.S. TECHNICAL EXPERTS COULD INITIALLY
MEET TO DISCUSS ISSUES INFORMALLY WITH GREEK AND TURKISH
COUNTERPARTS AT VENUE OF UN HEADQUARTERS--A LOCALE WHERE
SUCH MEETINGS OF EXPERTS AND DIPLOMATS CONSTITUTE
COMMONPLACE EVENTS. ALSO, THIS FORUM IS PARTICULARLY
APPROPRIATE SINCE LOS CONFERENCE ITSELF IS UN OFFSPRING.
SUCH AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION WOULD AT MINIMUM PROVIDE
BASIS FOR CONSIDERING WHETHER OR WHAT FURTHER U.S. MOVES
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MIGHT BE USEFUL.
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